



# U.S. Embassy Damascus

## Public Affairs Section Highlights, February 2011

### Ambassador Ford Meets Syrian Journalists

Ambassador Robert Ford had his first two roundtable discussions with Syrian journalists on Tuesday, February 8, and on Thursday February 10 at his residence. The journalists who attended the roundtable were Syrian journalists representing international and local media. In the first session, the Ambassador addressed journalists in English; the second session was held in Arabic. Questions raised during the roundtables focused on bilateral relations and regional and international developments.



### Outreach: English Language Teaching

Twenty-six English language supervisors of the Syrian Ministry of Education participated in a teacher training course at one of the ministry's training centers. Ms. Carol Haddaway, an English Language Fellow, conducted the training sessions. Participants were from Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and Raqqa.





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### Speaker Program: Black History Month

In celebration of Black History Month, Dr. Mark Huddle, Assistant Professor of History at the Department of History, Geography, and Philosophy at Georgia College and State University, conducted two lectures at the Damascus Community School and one lecture at the American Language Center.



### American Jazz in Syria Program: Monthly Jazz Jam

PD organized a Jazz jam session in Damascus on February 12, 2011 featuring the Amr Hammour Trio. This jam session was the first of a



series of twelve planned for 2011. The sessions are sponsored by the Cultural Section of the Embassy and are part of the American Jazz in Syria program, which features four visits by the Chris Byars Jazz Quartet.



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### The Urkesh Exhibit

The Urkesh exhibit, a collection of 33 posters depicting the American-led excavations at Tel Mozan, a historic site in northeastern Syria, will be on display at the Damascus National Museum through 8 March. The Opening Ceremony on 1 March, attended by the DCM and Syria's Deputy Minister of Culture, attracted an audience of students, journalists, professors, and government officials.



### Ambassador's Talk -- Highlight of Study Abroad Program



In late February Amb. Ford welcomed a group of staff and students from the American University Study Abroad Program at Aleppo University. They listened to his remarks on Syria and the region and then enthusiastically peppered him with questions. The students called meeting the Ambassador the highlight of their trip.



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## University Outreach



In a continuing series of outreach visits to public and private universities in Syria, the PAO and CAO received a warm welcome from Arab International University, a private university opened in 2005 near Damascus. University representatives outlined the

challenges facing them in administering the university and expressed keen interest in hosting PD educational and cultural programs, and particularly enthusiasm for the Fulbright programs, educational advising services, and English language offerings. In the coming year, PD will continue this relationship and target these challenges.